

Elyse Watkins

INTRODUCTION

As a man stops to contemplate his life, he asks himself the inevitable question, "What value has my life been to myself or to my fellow men? Have I used my allotted time to accomplish the purpose for which it was given me?" The Lord has said, "The race is not to the swift, but to him who endureth to the end." How grateful I am to all of those who instilled within my breast the desire to lead a life of constructive activity, regardless of the things that have happened to test the measure of my stamina. Without this guiding force, my life must surely have been far different than it has been.

Yes, there have been many burdens to bear in the life that God has given me to live, however, he has also given me much support and help to overcome these burdens. Just as Nephi said that the Lord had provided him with the strength necessary to meet and overcome all of his assigned tasks; so has he given me that same strength. For this blessing I am humbly grateful, therefore, it is my hope in setting forth very briefly the story of my life, that it might prove of some value to those who face struggles which they might think they are ill-prepared to meet, or that God should never have called them to endure.

The autumn of my life is a real joy, for I know I have been blessed with a good family and friends who have been more than loyal to me. With blessings of this type, men can meet and overcome any hardship or obstacle placed in their way. Let us take a brief look at my life to see if this has not been the case in my life.

CHAPTER I

Elijah H. Watkins made his first appearance in the little town of Midway, Utah, Wasatch County, at the home of Henry Watkins and Jane Ellis Alder Watkins on September 19, 1885. This brief story is the account of his life and some of the achievements and disappointments he has experienced during that life.

I can remember when I was five years old and Dad had two yoke of oxen that he used to haul logs for his father, John Watkins, over at the sawmill in Deer Creek Canyon, just west of Midway, Utah, and also up in Mill Flat in Snake Creek Canyon. He used the oxen to plow his ground and plant potatoes. I remember Dad taking Mother, my brother, Morris, and me down on the river to get wood with the oxen. After that he decided to sell the oxen and buy a team of horses.

I well remember the old grist mill on the West side of Midway called a "Bur Mill." It was used to grind flour. Eli Horner and Brig Mulner were the millers. Later Mark Jeffs bought the mill and used it for several years; then it was torn down. Mark Jeffs then came over on the East side of Midway and excavated a mill pond, built a mill race and mill. It still stands today owned by Ralph Johnson. Mark Jeffs also built a creamery just South of the mill where he used to make butter. It was later burned down.

Being a young boy, I just played around and went to school. Mother always saw to it that we went to Sunday School.

When I was ten years old in the year 1895, Dad decided it was time for me to learn how to do a few things. So he started me out milking the cows, herding them during the summer and then I would go to school in the winter. He taught me how to handle a horse and when I was about thirteen or fourteen years old I could rake and cut hay, plow, harrow, cultivate and go to the canyon for wood.

In 1899 when I was fourteen years old my father took a contract to build two buildings at the Wolverine Mine. He took my brother, Case, and me up there to help him snake out timber, and cut them. When we were finished with the timber Case went back home. I stayed to help him build the cabins. He did the saddle and cut the notches. I helped him fell and roll the logs to build the cabins. We put on the roof; put on some lumber and covered that with dirt because we didn't have any shingles. We sawed off all four corners of the cabin and made them nice and square; cut the doors and windows. Dad split some quaken asp poles and put them in the cracks and nailed them.

When we were finished with that, we had to make some mud for the chimney. Out about a quarter a mile from the cabin was the nearest place for water. We had to build a box and take it up there to mix the mud. Then we would haul it down the hill. Dad would dab the mud in these places where we had the chinking while I would go back after another load. After we had completed the cabin he sent me down to get a horse to move us out. As we started home, he said, "No use going down with an empty load, we need some firewood so we will take a load of wood."

As the family grew larger Dad decided to build two rooms on our house. I quarried the rock out by John Buehler's and Albert Kohler's homes. I hauled the sand and brick. When we were bringing the last load of brick home one wheel on the wagon broke. We patched it up enough to get the load home. I told Dad, "Guess we had better have a new wagon. We can't use that old thing anymore." I took two horses and put harnesses and collars on them and a saddle on the one, and I went to Provo. I bought a wagon from John Van Wagoner. I stayed all night in a livery stable, slept on the hay and the next morning came home. When we got the wagon home I finished hauling the rest of the brick to finish the house. Then I hauled lime for Will Van Wagoner. He used to burn lime, used in the building of houses, brick, etc. We hauled it everywhere, to Park City and Kamas.

From then on I just kept going from one thing to another. I quit school. Local employment was very scarce and many men were out of work. I sheared sheep, did farm work pitching hay, and working on the threshing machine in the fall.

I remember in the spring of 1901 there was an explosion at the Daly West Mine just south of Park City. Thirty-three men were killed and Johnny Burgi, Will Sims and Will Schweivel were the three from Midway, Utah, who were killed.

I went up to the Polly Springs Mine in Pine Creek just North of Midway to work. I worked there for awhile and came home for the Christmas Eve dance. The next morning when I woke up I had the mumps and couldn't do anything for about a month. I did some general work around until spring work opened up. About the fourth of May I went to the Superior Mine which is North of the Polly Springs and worked there all summer. I worked for Peter Abplanalp and Alfred Alder who had a contract from a man named Sappington who lived in Salt Lake City. He had three lovely daughters who would come up to the mine to spend their vacations. I almost fell in love with one of them. But they returned to Salt Lake City in the fall; I didn't have the transportation to get back and forth and so nothing ever came of it. I found out there is a difference between boys and girls, and from then on I always loved the ladies and had a good time sporting and working around.

From the Superior Mine I went to the Glenco, a mine about halfway between Heber City and Park City. About five hundred feet back in the tunnel we cut a station. Then we run a drift about two or two hundred and fifty feet. The station was sixteen feet wide, seventy feet long and twenty-five feet high; we cut a double compartment shaft and sunk it one hundred feet. When the mine shut down I came home and stayed around that winter as there was no employment of any kind.

In the spring of 1903, the LDS Ward was divided into the Midway First and Midway Second Wards. When they started building a new meeting house, I helped plow and excavate the basement. They took a big rock for a cornerstone; cut a nice square-shaped box and put some records in it. A lot of people put in coins and I put in twenty-five cents. I gave them a good work donation, mixed the mud and every other thing to help the building get started.

I sheared sheep that spring also. I worked on the old bank of Heber City. It was completed in 1904, and is still standing today.

Dad took a contract laying some bricks on the North School house at Heber Utah. He wanted me to tend mason and I helped him do that until he got done with the contract. I got a job bailing hay with my team and worked at a few odd jobs.

In the wintertime I put up some ice. A little after Christmas I went to the Wabash Mine which is South of Park City, up Ontario Canyon. I got a job there running a car. He would shovel the muck into the car, push it out of the shaft, haul it to the top and dump it. All this was done by hand. My partner working with me quit and the boss hired another man who I knew by the name of Ray Dennis. I had gone to school with him.

He said, "Hello, how do you do. I just got a job here as a shaft man." I said, "Have you ever worked in a shaft?" He said, "No, never worked on a machine either." I said, "It makes it rather a hard proposition for me, but we will give it a try." We went down the shaft six hundred feet, went in a tunnel about a mile and then went down another shaft two hundred feet. We drilled six holes and it is always customary for the one who drills the last hole to do the shooting. I cleaned the bar, hoisted the machine up on top; then got the powder and loaded the holes.

Conrad Gertsch of Midway, Utah, was the carman. He came down and helped load the holes. I said to Ray, "You have never done any of this business as I will spit the holes." I lit four candles called "snuffs,"

put one in each corner; then I gave the blasting signal. Then the engineer raised the bucket up about two feet and let it back down again to let us know he was there.

I said to Conrad, "Now you step up on the bail of that bucket." I said to Ray, "Here are three lighted candles, when they go out you can give me a light quick," which he did. I spit fifteen holes. We climbed on the bucket and gave the bell. As the engineer started taking us up about two or three feet off the ground, Ray's hat fell off. He jumped off to get it.

I gave the bell and stopped the bucket. Gertsch says, "For God's sake what are you doing that for?" I made no answer but reached down and got Ray by the collar of his jumper, hoisted him up and stuck him in the bucket. I stepped back on the bail, rung the bell and away we started. We got about thirty feet and the shots began to go. The engineer took us away quick. He got us up, let the trap door down; we got off and walked over to the station. Conrad's face was as white as snow, Ray Dennis was scared; he didn't know what to do. I don't know exactly what I looked like, but I do know I had just save a man's life.

When the Wabash shut down in a couple of months, I worked at the Daley West Mine in Park City until spring came.

I met Bill Witt one day and he asked me if I would go down to the Buckley Mine and do some assessment work. This mine is up Rock Canyon just East of Provo, Utah. When I finished that job I came back to Midway and hauled some hay and worked around until fall.

One day again I met Bill Witt, and he told me he was going to put some horses in the tunnel at the mine. I had a horse he wanted to buy. He said, "If you will sell him, I will buy him and you can come up and break him for me." I did this and while I was working there Al Scheivel was my partner.

While we were on this job Al got a telephone call saying his brother had fallen off the First Ward meeting house and had broken his neck. It was a terrible shock to Al and all of us. He didn't have the details of how it had happened. We later found out he had finished the mason work he was doing on the building and was taking the scaffold down. As he threw a plank off the scaffold, a nail in it caught in his pants and he was pulled off with it and his neck was broken.

I cut logs at the sawmill in Strawberry all summer; came home in the fall and bailed hay for Otto Harter.

Along about March, 1907, I went out to the reservation to see about locating a piece of ground. When I got back I went up to the Southern Tier Mine in Snake Creek Canyon to do some work for Henry Coleman and Johnny Martin. They had a contract from a man named Nate who lived in Park City. When I finished that job I came down and sheared some sheep.

In December, 1907, I said to Mother, "I believe I will try to get a job at the Mountain Lake Mine in Snake Creek Canyon." I asked Bill Witt how he was fixed for men and he said he needed a couple. He said, "I want to cut some logs on the snow crust because we can't get them out in the summer time, it's too rough." My brother, Morris, and I went up and cut logs for Bill Witt. He was the boss at the Mountain Lake Mine. After we finished cutting logs, I went in the mine and worked on a machine. Arch Henderson, Joe Hair, and I were on the same machine. Ed Bronson, Albert Stewart, George Olsen and Otto Linder worked on the same shift with us.

We all went on shift on the morning of April 27, 1908, as happy and as cheerful as any men could be. Little did I know that this would be the last shift I would put in with my eyesight; that at ten minutes to two that afternoon my sight would be gone forever.

CHAPTER II

On April 27, 1908, we went to work, got the muck out, put up the bar, drilled all the holes. The muck was all out and we put up the turn sheets. Arch Henderson and I took one machine off the bar. He said, "I'll go out after the powder and caps." I swung the machine around on the bar and started to carry back the dull steel. Joe Hair was shoveling back the loose rock and picking it.

I just came back for another armful of steel, and got in the middle of the turn sheet about eleven feet from the hole. Joe picked in a hole that had been missed. Boom! went the shot and blew off his head. It knocked me over backwards. Blood was running from my eyes, ears, nose and mouth. The gas was so thick I couldn't stand it. I walked out about a hundred feet and could not walk any further so I got down on my hands and knees and crawled. I crawled out about one hundred feet to the switch, then over behind the airline so I wouldn't drown in the water if I fainted.

I heard footsteps running up the plank; it was Arch Henderson. He said, "For God's sake, what's the matter, Lige?" I said, "Joe picked in a missed hole." Then here came George Olsen and Otto Linder. I said, "You and George go in and see how Joe is and Otto will take me out on the timber truck. He took me out and the first man I met was Trace Bronson. He said, 'What's happened?' I said, 'There's been an explosion. Get some men and go in and help get Joe out.'" Otto took me into the boarding house.

Fan Clyde, we always called her Aunt Fan, was the cook. She got warm water and began bathing my eyes. The men telephoned down to get my Dad at the sawmill which wasn't very far from the mine. Dad came running as fast as he could. Just as he came around the corner of the boarding house, they brought Joe Hair out of the tunnel on a plank. His head was gone; Dad said it was a horrible sight he would never forget. Dad came on in where I was and didn't know me the way I was plastered with blood, rocks and mud. Aunt Fan washed the blood and rocks from my eyes as best she could and bandaged them up.

In spite of the terrific and intense pain I was suffering I asked that nobody should phone Mother so she wouldn't panic. I wanted to talk to her myself, however, the boss, Bill Witt, went over and phoned down to the operators in Heber City and told them there had been an explosion at the mine. That a man had been killed and another hurt, and he didn't know how bad. Bill asked Will Watkins to go down from his home in Midway and deliver a message to Mother that one man had been

hurt. Mother went into a panic because you can imagine the terrible shock it was to her.

They took me over to the bunkhouse where the office was and gave me first aid. Then I called up Mr. Issacson, one of our neighbors, and asked if he would go and get mother and bring her to the phone as I wanted to talk to her. Mr. Issacson said she and Johnny Peterson, another neighbor, were just on the step coming in the door.

Mother took up the receiver and I started talking to her. She was so frightened she did not know what to do and couldn't understand one word I said. I asked to talk to Johnny. Johnny and I talked and she could hear what we were saying and calmed down a little bit. I talked to her again and tried to reassure her. I told her I was going to start home right away, and whatever else she did she was to have Dr. Russell Wherritt at home when I got there.

They hooked up the team and put me in the bob sleigh and we came part way on the snow which was three or four feet deep. I then walked part of the way and the first one I met was my brother, Morris, on the horse. The next one was my brother, Case, in the buggy. He turned the buggy around and we got in. We went a little way and met Johnny Peterson with his buggy and team. He had come to see if he could be of any assistance.

When I got home Doctor Wherritt was there. He washed and cleaned out my eyes and bandaged them up. The next morning he came over and dressed my eyes again. Then I had to go to Heber and give my testimony at the Coroner's inquest for Joe Hair.

The train left Heber that afternoon and Dad and I were on it. We went to Provo, Utah, to the hospital. They took me right in and put me on the operating table and started to wash and dig the rocks out of my eyes. They had to dress them every hour. The hospital had already sent to Salt Lake City for a specialist. He looked my eyes over and said one eye will be normal and the other eye perfect. Oh! what hopes this gave me.

Each day they dug out some rocks and dressed my eyes. Digging out the rocks caused an inflammation to rage about ten days or two weeks. Hypos in time usually quieted the pain, but in my case they didn't. They had to dig out thirty-four rocks, and it took them practically a month to do it. Dad came and stayed with me at the hospital for two weeks. My brother, Case, stayed two or three days. When the pain got so I couldn't bear it any longer, they took me up to Salt Lake City.

The specialist there said he would have to take out one eye. I said, "You will never take it out." He said, "It will kill you." I said, "I will live with it or die with it. It will make no difference, it is not coming out." They took me back to Prove.

Mother came down one day on the 28 of May, 1908, and asked the doctors if she could watch the nurses dress my eyes and they said she could. She watched them and when they got done, she said to the doctor, "Can I take my boy home" I believe I can take care of him." The doctor said, "Yes." He knew Mother, and my Mother was a good nurse.

They brought me home on the 30th day of May, 1908, and Dad was there to meet me at the train. As we came home they were having Rachel Coleman's funeral. When I got home all the folks were glad to see me and I was grateful to be home. Many a friend was there to see me.

The doctor said I would have to come back in ten days. Mother dressed my eyes, but they kept getting worse. One side of my head all went black, but Mother never told me until it had all gone away. I prayed, Mother prayed and we all prayed, but the pain didn't cease; it didn't cease. It just seemed like I would go out of my head. After about seven days the pain did cease.

I went back to the doctor and he said I was doing all right. He asked me, "Have you seen anybody?" I said, "No, but I have prayed to the Lord and he has helped me out." He told me I could go back home and stay a little while longer, but I would have to come back in about two weeks.

The second time I went back I was up learning how to get around. I went outside but didn't know anything about getting around in the dark. I was in a world of darkness, a different world and I didn't know what to do. Nobody could tell me what to do or how to do it. I had to learn it in my own way. I made a miscue and fell head-first down the cellar steps, never touching either the sides or the top. I landed in the bottom on my feet and came out all right. Mother came running and though I had killed myself. She took me by the arm and led me into the house.

Then I started learning to get around in the house. The first time I ran into a door. You know that is the worst thing for a blind man; a half-opened door.

I would then go outside and practice getting around out there. Patriarch Robert S. Duke used to haul milk for us. He took it out to Fred Buchler's creamery. He would stop every day or so to see how I was getting along. One day he said to me, "How would like to have your patriarchal blessing?" I said, "I would like that very much." He made the arrangements and gave me the blessing. He said that in about two weeks he would have it ready and would have it all typed out so I could have it read to me anytime I wanted it.

I went on about two weeks and one day he came in and said, "I'm in trouble." I said, "What's the matter?" I thought maybe he had been hurt. "No," he said, "I have lost your patriarchal blessing." I said, "That doesn't amount to too much. You can easily give another one." He said, "My boy, it isn't that easy. You want your testimony strengthened, not weakened. If I would give you another one, and it isn't just like the first one I just gave you, the first thing you would ask is which one is right? I will have to take the blame.

About three months later he came back and said he was ready to give me the blessing over again. He gave the blessing and he never missed three words in the entire blessing. I said to Brother Duke, "Do you know what you have promised me?" And he said, "Everything shall be fulfilled." To this time every promise has been fulfilled but one, and that is yet to be fulfilled in time.

While I was going back and forth to the doctor in Provo, I was studying in my own mind what kind of a vocation I could take up under the present conditions in order to make a living. I decided that with the help of my brothers I would try the teaming business. I bought another horse, wagon, and harness. I put my brother, Case, upon the Timpanogos Canal. From there we went down and worked at the fish hatchery.

When we got done, we built a stable for the horses. Case went out and got some wood and brought it back and he, Dad, and Morris helped build me a stable. Case finished the stable putting on some plies and a straw roof.

During the summer and winter my sisters, Orpha and Mary, took me up town and back so I could learn to get up there by myself. I accomplished this getting around by myself by the spring of 1909.

From that time on I went with my team everywhere. I hauled baled hay and lime for Will Van Wagoner. I bought a binder and my brothers, Case and Lamar, and Dad helped me put it together. We cut grain all that fall. Also that fall I bought another team of horses and sent it up in the winter time to haul pipe for the Utah Power and Light Company in Snake Creek.

When spring came in 1910, I had to have a piece of land so I bought a piece and it was mostly sage. We went out to grub sage and plowed it. We made a cart out of the hind part of a wagon and hooked the plow to it so it wouldn't jump out of the ground. It was very hard to do it this way. We got about twenty acres seeded down into wheat, sowed some alfalfa and had a good crop and went out on the binder. I put on two shifts until it was done.

When this was done, I had nothing to do about tending my horses. I could not afford to hire this done. I lead them to water, fed them and cleaned the stable three times a day. I was working all the time.

In the spring of 1911, we put in our crops and sent two teams out to the dam in Strawberry. After that work was done we came home, put up the crops and went back on the binder.

That winter I got a job from the Utah Power and Light Company up in Snake Creek hauling some electric wire over into American Fork Canyon. Now I am going to try and explain to you the handicaps which I worked under. We got on the bob sleigh, Lamar and I, and drove up into the mouth of Bonner Canyon in Snake Creek. We cut out of the forks of a tree; well, we called it a kind of an "A." We wired these bunches of wire on it weighing from 190 to 200 pounds and hooked a horse on each one. I had to take a small rope and put around the wire so I could follow it. I took a line so I could hold the horse back and my brother, Lamar, went on lead. The snow was three feet deep, a hard trail. I followed behind and walked every day back and forth until we had completed hauling this wire over into American Fork Canyon.

Later on I got a job hauling hay for Otto Harter out at the Strawberry Dam. I would bring a load of lumber back on each trip.

I went to Francis and hauled sand, gravel and cement for the Francis and Woodland schoolhouse which was being built. One morning when I was harnessing my horses, Johnny Salmon, the boss, changed horses to see if I could tell the difference. I knew something was wrong the minute I laid my hand on the horse. When you get familiar with the build of an animal, they are very easy to identify.

Our next job was hauling machinery from Park City to the Glenco mine. The snow was about five or six feet deep, and we had to get up about one o'clock in the morning in order to get over the snow before it thawed out and while it was frozen. The last trip we made there was a man who had a horse that was not used to the trail. We were about a hundred yards from the mine and this horse got off the trail. We were behind it and couldn't go ahead. The men had to work with the horse and force it to get back on the trail. By the time we got unloaded we were tired out.

Around two in the afternoon there were two nice ladies, Maude Yake, and Alice Dudler, who were cooking at the boarding house and they invited us to dinner. They had a regular "downtown dinner" everything to suit the occasion. After we finished dinner we hooked up the team and started home. The roads were soft and sometimes the horses would get off, but they were good horses and got us back to Midway all right.

I went from there and got a job with Bill Lewis in Park City hauling cement from Park to Brighton. I also worked for Tom David hauling cement from Brighton up to the Marion Lake at Brighton. We came home about the time the snow came.

The next season I went over to Cottonwood canyon and worked there hauling ore. When that shut down I hired Sidney Epperson and Will Bigler to take me and my teams and go and move some machinery from the Wabash Mine near Park City. We also hauled plank and lumber to the Dely Judge Mine and the Alliance Tunnel. I went up to Louie Smith's at Kanab and took a job on the hay loader. I pitched hay from the loader and that is hard work. After I finished that I came home for the winter.

My brothers, Case and Lamar, had gone into work for themselves and I was confronted with new problems. My brother-in-law, Earl M. Hardy, bought the Scheivel place and asked me if I would like to run it. I said, "I don't know. I have to hire every man to run it and sometimes I get caught in a pinch and it makes it very hard for me. But I will talk to my brother, Morris, about it and see if he will go in with me and run it."

I wrote Morris who at that time was living in Eureka and explained the conditions to him. He said he would accept and he came home in the spring and we put in the crops.

Along about the first of June, 1917, nine years after my accident, I again went to Provo to see the doctor. This was the last trip I made.

In 1917, Murray B. Allen who was the Chairman for the State of Utah for the Blind came to Midway, Utah, to see me at my home. He wanted to know if I would like to learn the Braille. I said, "Let me feel it and see what it is like." He showed me the alphabet and let me feel with my fingers. I said, "Well, Murray, I don't feel I want to be bothered with stuff; I am too busy a man with working."

The following spring, Jim Jacobs, who was blind and lived in Park City came over and asked me if I would like to learn the Braille. He read me a piece in Braille and when he was done he said, "How do you like that?" I said, "That's fine, I didn't know that a blind person could read that fast." So he said, "There are lots of younger blind people who read faster than I." He gave me the alphabet and a little primer. It was just like starting out in the first grade in school all over again. He told me to learn this by the time he came back; said it might be two or three months. He told me the government was going to put up an appropriation to hire teachers to teach the adult blind who had never had the privilege to go to school.

In about three months he came back with a slate and a stylus which is used in Braille and asked how I was doing. I told him I had read and re-read it, thrown it down and was disgusted, and then I had gone back and picked it up again. He said, "That's natural. Now I want you to learn how to write Braille." So he taught me and told me he would come around oftener.

I had to do all my studying at night because I worked during the day. When he came back in a month, I had learned Grade I. He told me he was going to start on Grade 2, but that it would be harder, so he gave me a lesson or two. I had learned how to write the alphabet and some of the words in the Primer. He said, "You just keep practicing and when you can write a few words and mail them to me. I will correct them and send them back to you in the mail because I can't get around as often as I would like to." So I did just that, studying every night and when I could.

When he came again he told me I was progressing fine and he taught me a lot of signs. There were certainly a lot of them, but I got so I could do pretty good on them. After I got so I could read and write Braille, he told me it was now up to me. The more I read, the better I would be able to read. The more I wrote Braille, the better I would be able to write it. So it was now all up to me.

During the time I was studying Braille at night; I had to carry on my work in the daytime. Morris and I put up the crops. We hauled lime

rock for a man who had a contract with the Amalgamated Sugar Company hauling this rock from the Snake Den, northwest of the Memorial Hill in Midway, Utah, to Heber City. When it came time to put up the first crop of hay, we did that and then again went back to hauling lime rock.

When the second crop of hay was ready, we cut it, cut the grain and threshed it. I said to my brother, Morris, "let's buy bail for the public and pick up a few dollars." We bought the bailer and went over to Snyderville and got a job bailing 259 tons of hay for Chris Stoven. I pitched every pound of that hay into the hopper while another man tramped it. While we were there, the Armistice of 1918 was signed. We would bail the hay and get some ahead, and then Chris would ask us to help him load some of the railroad cars with hay. We loaded eight or ten cars. I was used to handling bailed hay and could handle it about as good as a man who could see.

I said to Morris when we brought the bailer home, "I have given the horses a pretty hard deal this summer. I am rather tired and I am going to take off until spring and have a good rest.

The next spring of 1919 my brother-in-law, Earl M. Hardy, took a contract breaking lime rock at the Snake Den, loading it and delivering it to Heber City for the Amalgamated Sugar Company. I hauled for him for two years.

At the end of the second year my brother, Morris, said, "I believe I will give up the farm and buy me a place of my own and haul rock for myself." I then hired Dave Hamilton to run the farm and in the fall bought me a threshing machine. I ran it two years and did pretty well. I sold it to George Fisher and Bill Davis. The next year Clyde Alder and I raised a nice big patch of potatoes. Oh! my but they were thick. We sold a carload to a man named Parks from Orem, Utah. The rest we sold in Park City.

In 1925, I went back to the Mayo Brother Clinic at Rochester, Minnesota to see about eyes. They said they could do nothing for me.

I came back in 1926, and farmed and that was my last year. The teaming business was getting bad. Trucks were coming in and crowding horses out, and I had to do something else. I told Earl Hardy, "I am going to turn the farm back to you. I can't go it alone any longer, the teams are going out of business." I sold one team, harness and wagon and a part of the machinery and I had plenty of it.

I fenced fifty acres of my ground with cedar posts, netting and wire so it would hold sheep. I hired Bill Sizemore to do this for me. In the fall I bought five hundred head of lambs. I bought an old bus

from the School District to camp in, and went out there and stayed so the coyotes and dogs wouldn't eat them. I brought them in in the fall and fed them all winter myself. I made the racks to feed them and from then on I always fed my sheep myself. I bought forty-five to fifty tons of hay and packed it out in my arms and fed them for nine straight years.

For three years the sheep did well; then came 1931, the crash. Everybody knows about that. There came a drought and the government declared Utah a drought state. The government appropriated money to dig wells to develop water to water the cattle and sheep. The ground was burning up.

I went down to Salt Lake City to the State Capitol to put in an application for a loan. In two days the engineer approved it and I came back and went up to the Park Utah and borrowed a pump. I hired Orson Burgi to run it with an old Ford car and went on digging down to get more water. I sent to Stockton, California, to the Waterworks Equipment Company and ordered a pump. I had to wait ten days before it came. When it came the man who sold it to me was supposed to put it up. After he got it together it wouldn't work. He didn't seem to know anything about it. I said to him, "We have to get it going. If you don't know how to run this pump and put it together, just give me the authority, and I will put it together. Or you can go to Salt Lake City and get an engineer out here right away so I can get going." He said, "Go ahead and fix it if you think you can. I will go to Salt Lake and get the engineer."

The next day the man from the Waterworks Equipment Company came with the engineer. I had the pump going. He said, "I don't see anything wrong with that." I said, "No, it's going all right." I said to the man from the waterworks equipment, "When I get this well completed, the agreement that you are to come up and install this pump." He said, "You can do it as well as the engineer." I asked him, "What do you pay for installing it?" He told me \$15.00 and I said I will install the pump for that amount.

When we got down we struck a half-a-second foot of water, and that was as far as I could go because of lack of money. Then I installed the pump, built a little house over it to protect it from the storm and weather. I had a float switch on it and when my water ticket came; I could turn the water in. It sure increased my water and I could water all my land.

The following spring things were worse than ever. I had a nephew Lyman Watkins, who was about sixteen years of age. He was looking around for work and couldn't find anything so I said to him, "I will give you a job if you want to wait until fall for your pay." He said, "That

will be better than nothing. What do you have on your mind?" I told him I had a team of horses and if he would plow five acres of ground; I would buy the seed potatoes if he would plant, cultivate, water and harvest them. I told him I had the pump and he could water between the tickets, and it would not interfere with irrigating the farm. So we worked it this way and every time we wanted water we just turned on the pump.

I ran the pump and he did the irrigating. We had a half-a-second foot of water and could water seven rows at once. He would weed, cultivate and water them. In the fall we harvested a bumper crop of potatoes, and after paying the expenses we had \$400.00 a piece. We both thought that was pretty good.

I sold my sheep in 1935, because things got so bad. The next two years I raised some more potatoes, but the price had gone down and I sold them for forty cents a bushel. When 1937, came I just decided that I was going to quit the whole business.

I said to Mother, "I am going to go the Salt Lake City if I can learn something more about the Braille and learn how to typewrite." I went down to Salt Lake to see my sister, Mary and her husband, Carl Bronson. I told them I had come down to try and go to school; that I wanted to brush up on Braille and learn to typewrite.

Blindness does not in any way alter normal human desires, therefore, I thought I needed a little recreation. I said to my sister, Mary, one afternoon, "I believe I will go up to the dance tonight." She said not unkindly, "What would you want to go to a dance for? You can't see and you don't know anybody." "Well," I said, "I have to start sometime." So I went up to the dance hall above the Woolworth store. It was run by a man named Jackson. It was a big hall and they used to have large crowds.

I went in and paid my ticket. I asked the lady at the ticket booth where the manager was and she called him over for me. He said, "What's your trouble." I said, "I'm a blind man and I would like to know what you have to do to get dancing here." He said, "Well, I'll tell you plain, if you can't dance you might as well go home. If you can, you will be all right." I said, "How do you demonstrate yourself?" He answered and said, "I will get my wife to dance with you. If she approves of you, she will make you acquainted with some of the other ladies and that will be all right."

She danced with me, passed me okay and introduced me to six or seven other ladies. From that time on I had a good time. I was where the lights were bright and the floors were slick. I had left the rocky roads and ditches and I was just having a good time.

At the Blind Center in Salt Lake City they have a social once a month to entertain the blind. They have a nice program, refreshments and after that they dance. I was sitting by a lady that I knew when we were having refreshments. When they started to dance I asked her how she would like to dance. She said, "Fine." This lady had heart trouble but I didn't know it at the time. We danced around the floor about a time and a half and she slumped dead in my arms. Mrs. Groutch, manager of the dance, came over and said, "What's the matter?" I said, "I believe Edith is dead." They took her and gave her first aid and called the doctor. When he arrived he said she died when she fell.

The next week I went over to another dance hall named the Townsend. I went in and bought a ticket. They directed me to the right and I gave the manager my ticket. He pinned a little ribbon on my lapel so he could tell who had paid their ticket. He said, "It looks like you are a blind man. There is a blind man who comes here regularly; this man is Lyman Reber." I said, "He is an old friend of mine. Is he here?" He said, "Yes." He is about twenty feet away from here talking to some woman." I said, "Would you mind going over and telling him there is an old friend who would like to talk to him?" He said, "Sure." He went over and told Lyman. I could imagine the smile on Lyman's face as he came towards me. Two women came over with him. I said, "Hello, Lyman" and he said, "For goodness sake, how are you? What are you doing here?"

I told him I thought I would drop in and see what was going on and maybe dance a time or two. He made me acquainted with the two ladies. I said, "I am a stranger here and if one of you ladies don't mind taking me over to the checkroom, I will check my hat and coat." We did this; the music started and I asked which one of the ladies would like to dance. We changed partners as we came off the floor. We had a lot of fun and I was made acquainted with seven or eight ladies and before the evening was over I had met about twenty ladies.

Lyman and I palled around together all that winter. We went to dances two or three times a week; all kinds of parties. About a week or two later I met a lady who eventually became my wife. I started taking her home and as is the usual thing as time goes on, I took her home oftener. One night when we got home we started talking. She said, "Did you ever contemplate getting married?" "No, not since I have been blind, no woman would want to marry a blind man." She said, "I know four or five women who can see who are married to blind men and they are getting along and are happier and make better husbands than some men who can see."

I asked her a question, "Have you got something that you want to have done? You have a little girl about six years old. You tell me you haven't got a home. Maybe you need some help too." She said, "That is exactly what I am meaning. I want my little girl to be raised up by a father, to help school and guide her along. I could be a companion and we could help each other out." I told her that I would give this some consideration.

I had not been home all winter so I decided to come up and visit Mother and Dad and ask their opinion. I told Mother and Dad I was contemplating marriage; that this woman had a little girl not quite six years old, and I asked them what they thought about it. Dad said, "I am glad to hear that." He laughed and said jokingly, "There is one thing about marriage if things don't go just right, there is always an open door and you can get a divorce. You aren't out very much, only a little real estate."

After my two weeks visit I went on the bus back to my sister's home in Salt Lake City. She said, "Well, you are back and I am glad to see you. Did you know your girlfriend had moved to a new job. She got laid off where she was and is working for some army man who has quite a high rank. She is taking care of him and his wife and a girl fifteen years old. She sleeps in the basement and they won't even allow her and her little girl to eat at the same table. She left her address so when you came down you could give her a ring on the telephone." I said to Mary, "I am figuring on getting married. What do you think of that?" Mary said, "I think it's fine." Her husband, Carl said, "I am glad to hear that. I think that woman will make you a fine companion."

The next day I called her up to make a date with her to go to the dance. She said, "I am working at a new job and they will only give me one day off a week in the afternoon on Sundays. I am sorry I cannot go."

I said, "You know the proposition that you and I were talking about before I went home to Midway? How would you like to go through with it?" She said, "Nothing would make me happier." "Well, then, get your things together and tell them you are going to quit your job tomorrow. I will come up and get you and we will get a ring and the license and get married. "If it suits you?" She said, "This suits me fine."

After the Bishop had pronounced us man and wife on May 2, 1938, until death do us part, we got on the bus and came up to Heber City. When we got off the bus we met Martin Huber. He said, "You want a ride home, Lige?" I said, "Yes, but I have a couple of passengers." I made him acquainted with my wife and step-daughter. On the way to Midway he said, "So you got married. That is quite a surprise."

When we arrived home I made her acquainted with Mother and Dad and everything seemed to be all right. About a week later Mother and Dad gave us a wedding supper and a dance for our wedding present. We had a large crowd of friends and relatives; everybody enjoyed themselves and had a good time.

The first week in June my wife was bothered with her heart. Doctor Wherrit gave her an examination and told her she had a toxic goiter. She would have to have it operated on so she would be well and be able to enjoy life. He asked her how long she had had it. She told him eleven years. Doctor Wherrit told her she could not have had it eleven years and lived. She said she had been treated by a man who could cure a goiter without operating by changing the blood stream. Doctor Wherrit told her this was right, but afterwards it always came back worse than ever. He told her she would have to have the operation.

We made the arrangements and the doctor treated her. She was operated on on the twelfth day of September, 1938. Doctor Hatch told her she would have to have another operation so I took her back on the twelfth day of December, 1938. She was released on December 22, 1938, and we stayed with my sister and brother-in-law in Salt Lake and came home on Christmas Eve. She was a very sick woman; it took all that winter and most of the next summer to get her well again.

My wife read in the papers one day that the Green brothers in San Francisco had given two men their eye sight by using the corneas out of a convict who was executed at the penitentiary. We went to San Francisco in 1939, to see if the doctors could do something for me in this way, but they could do nothing unless they could use a whole eye and science had not achieved this yet.

I suggested to my wife that we take a trip to Tacoma, Washington, and see her daughter and spend a week or two. We went up the coast and stayed three weeks; came back down through Idaho and landed home safe and had a nice time.

I had leased my farm for three years to a man; he was a good man, but a poor farmer. My half didn't pay for the taxes and water assessments.

In 1940, my father, Henry Watkins, passed away and in March, 1941, my mother, Jane Watkins, also passed away.

Late in 1941 I took rheumatism. In 1942, I sold my farm and went to the hospital. I stayed there a month with rheumatism but they could not do anything for me. I returned home and was until 1944 recuperating and trying to get better.

In October, 1944, we decided we would move to Salt Lake City for a while. I felt a little better while I was down there.

Then on the first of April, 1947, I came back to Midway, Utah, to fix up my home. My wife and daughter stayed there until the first of May until school was out. I took up the floors in my house, dug out the dirt, packed it in a bucket outside. When I got this done, I put back the sub floors, put down the good floor and sanded it. I lowered the ceiling and completed that. Ray Kohler built me some new cabinets in the kitchen. I dug sixty feet of sewer line. Then I dug a cesspool, drilled the holes and got my neighbor, Glade Davis, to do the blasting. I shoved this out until I got it down a little over ten feet.

I hired the plumbers to come and do the plumbing. While they were working at this in the house, I dug up 260 feet of an old pipeline that had been in for fifty years. It went from the main line to the corral. I put in the pipe, cut and fit every bit myself and made a place so I could put the hose on to sprinkle the lawn.

School was out and my wife and step-daughter came home. I built a room upstairs so my step-daughter could have a private room. The plumbers completed their job; I covered up the trench and put a form on the cesspool. Earl Kohler ran the concrete over it and sealed it up. I put in three more floors and then decided to build a concrete porch and walk. I hired a carpenter to do the main structure of the porch. I told him when he was done I could put the ceiling in myself.

I got the cement mixer and a man to run it. I helped put in the forms for the walk; helped trowel it down and smooth it up. I then hired Raymond North to haul me forty-five yards of dirt to level up the yard and planted a new lawn. I scattered the dirt with a shovel and raked it all down nice and smooth. When that was done I went out by myself and shingled half of my granary and one half of the house.

I had then to turn to some other work. I had to fix the fence; it was falling down. I dug out the old posts and put in all new cedars and sawed them myself. I got some two by fours; planed them with the hand plane and got them all lined up. I ordered some one by fours; fourteen feet long; each one made three pickets. I cut them to fit; cut the bevels on them and planed both sides and the edges with the hand plane. That was a lot of hard work to do all alone.

As I put the pickets on, every day there were hundreds of people passing, as I live on the main highway, lots of them knew me and would stop and ask me how I was getting along.

I have learned to play checkers and cards so I could take my part when I went to a party. My wife, step-daughter and I and our neighbor, Jack Kuhni, used to play cards many times. After the card game was over we would have some nice refreshments.

I bought my step-daughter a nice piano; hired a teacher to give her lessons. Jack Kuhn also used to come over and spend many an hour teaching her something about her music.

My step-daughter was provided a home and an education. She graduated from the Wasatch High School with honors; got a job in the bank at Heber City. From there she went to Salt Lake City to work for the Prudential Life Insurance Company. My wife had her health back due to the operations she had.

Along in the first part of May, 1950, I took very sick. I went over to Doctor Nielson; he gave me an examination and said I would have to have an operation for gland trouble right away. I went down to the St. Marks Hospital on May 18, and was operated on the 19th. When I got well they released me. On July 1, 1950, I took sixteen X-ray treatments. I also had to go back on September 12, to be operated on again. I came from the hospital on September 18, 1950.

My wife left for the State of Washington on September 27. She stayed there a month and then came home. She cleaned up the house a little and packed all her personal goods in her suitcase. She said to me, "I have something to tell you." I said "All right. Is it good news?" She said, "I don't think very good. I am going to leave you." On November 10, 1950, she left and went back to Salt Lake City.

On January 21, 1951, I went back to the St. Marks Hospital for my final operation. I got along fairly well. After the third day I had a hemorrhage and was bleeding badly. I said to the nurse, "Is this blood?" She said, "I'll say it is." She ran and reported it to the head matron who called two doctors and two registered nurses. While they were getting ready; I prayed. I prayed to the Lord that if he would spare my life I would go to the temple and have my work done. The Lord answered my prayers, and when the doctors came back figuring to perform surgery; they examined me and I had stopped hemorrhaging. The one doctor said, "All he needs now as weak as he is is a blood transfusion." They gave me one and when I was strong enough, they allowed me to come home.

I stayed with my brother Case, three weeks and I stayed with my sister, Orpha, three weeks. I said to Orpha one day, "I have a problem which I have to solve out along in my own mind." She said, "You had better stay another month with me." "No, I am going down home right away."

My problem was solved and I was granted a divorce on the twenty-first day of January, 1952.

I started to go to Church at the Midway First Ward, went ward teaching and tried to live up to the requirements that the Bishop of the ward asked

of me. I received a recommendation and went through the temple of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and had my endowment work done. I did work for three that year and gave money to have others done; all told one hundred were done. I live in hopes to do more.

I live alone, do my own cooking and practically all my own housework. The things that I cannot do, my sisters come and help me with. I have all the Church works in Braille. I read them constantly and I love them.

During the winters of 1957 and 1958, the Wasatch Seminary sent two students twice a week to read to me. The only times they did not come was when they were engaged in other activities. They read the Articles of Faith by Talmadge, A Marvellous Work and a Wonder by Elder LeGrand Richards, etc. I enjoyed the young people and their reading immensely. It was educational and filled many a lonesome hour for me.

Eighteen months ago I took the Asiatic Flu which left me with a bronchial condition. Now I cannot go ward teaching or to Church at the Midway First Ward which I miss very much.

I am putting the story of my life in book form and having it published with the thought that it will help somebody else over some of their difficulties in their lives.

One more thought that I have picked up on the way: "From birth to the hearse I never did anything in life, that I could not have done worse."

I have had many prayers answered and have had the privilege of having things made known to me that every man does not have. I want to bear testimony that I know that God lives, that Jesus is his Son, crucified for the sins of the world; that we might be brought forth in the resurrection. I know that all the prophets were chosen by the Lord in their own time. I know the Prophet Joseph Smith was chosen in this last dispensation to restore the gospel of Jesus Christ. I bear testimony to this world that I know God lives, and I do this in the name of Jesus Christ, AMEN.